BC STATS
Province of British Columbia
Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations

Infoline

Issue: **97-10** **5** Pages
March 7, 1997

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http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

Report

Women in the Workforce

BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Oct 1/96	% change on year ago
BC	3,888.5	2.5
Canada	30,101.6	1.2
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT		% change
(BC - at market prices - $ millions)	1995	on year ago
Current Dollars	103,273	4.6
Constant (1986) Dollars	74,107	1.9
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Dec	2,726	-0.6
Merchandise Exports (raw) Dec	2,031	-5.0
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Dec	2,551	-1.0
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change
(all items - 1986=100)	Jan '97	on year ago
BC	139.0	0.7
Canada	137.1	2.2
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change
(seasonally adjusted)	Feb '97	on year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,000	2.7
Employed - BC	1,828	2.6
Unemployed - BC	173	3.7
		Feb '96
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	8.6	8.5
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	9.7	9.6
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Mar 5/97	Mar 6/96
Prime Business Rate	4.75	7.00
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	5.05	6.50
- 5 year	7.00	7.80
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Mar 5/97	Mar 6/96

SOURCES:
Gross Domestic Product: Statistics Canada, revised by BC STATS
Population, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Earnings: Statistics Canada
Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Review

Statistics Canada Workshop - Victoria

Making the Numbers Work for You is a half-day workshop that introduces participants to the wealth of Statistics Canada information on the country's economy, institutions and people. Receive practical instruction on tapping this valuable information source and learn:

- how to save time and money when conducting research
- how to use the data in your specific projects
- how to gain competitive advantage by using Statistics Canada data

Fee: $95 (plus GST).

Location: The Bedford Regency Hotel, Victoria
March 21st, 1997 (8:30 - Noon)

Statistics Canada Info Session - Vancouver

Learn about the **Industrial Monitor on CD-ROM** from the responsible Statistics Canada Director. Indicators on industry demand, supply, prices, costs, investment/capital stock and labour for 198 Canadian industries grouped in 24 sectors. No charge.

When: Friday, March 14th, 9 am - 10 am
Coffee at 8:45

Where: 6th Flr Boardroom, Library Square Tower
300 West Georgia Street, Vancouver

Please contact Workshop Registrar:
tel (604) 666-1851
fax (604) 666-6966

Released this week by BC STATS

- Exports (BC Origin), December 1996
- Exports (BC Origin), 1988 - 1996 (Annual/1996 Prelim.)
- **Next week:** No subscription releases next week.

BC STATS, Min. of Finance & Corporate Relations, Box 9410 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, B.C. V8W 9V1
Tel: (250) 387-0327 Fax: (250) 387-0329 Web: http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca E-mail: BCSTATS@fincc04.fin.gov.bc.ca

Infoline Report:

March 7, 1997

Women's Labour Market Participation

Reprinted from the November 1996 issue of *Earnings & Employment Trends*. An annual subscription is $60 + GST.

Women's Labour Market Participation

One of the most important social changes that has occurred in B.C. over the past forty years has been the ever increasing labour market participation of women, and its resulting dramatic impact on the composition of the workforce. In the mid 1950s, only one worker in four was a woman. Today, 45 per cent are women.

Are women continuing to increase their workforce participation?

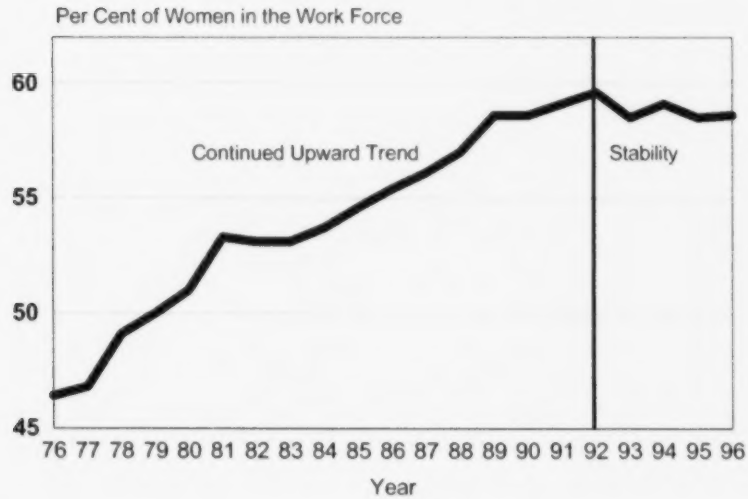
Over the last four years, there have been definite signs that women's work patterns are stabilizing. In 1992, the women's participation rate of 59.6 per cent achieved an historical high, and since then has fallen back marginally to 58.6 in 1996. This represents the first time in 40 years that the upward trend has stalled for more than two consecutive years, and it has done this despite relatively good job opportunities for women. (Women's unemployment rate has been below nine per cent for the past three years. For eleven of the twelve previous years, the rate had been above—some years well above—nine per cent.)

Will there be further rapid increases in the labour market participation of women?

Significant, sustained increases are unlikely. The reason for this can be gleaned from women's recent participation rates by different age groups. The principal driver of the post-war changes has been the evolving labour market commitment of women in their child bearing/rearing years, those age 25 to 44. Currently, all age cohorts of women in this stage of their lives are demonstrating similar workforce behaviour, all participating around the 75–80 per cent level, and their participation rates seem to have stabilized. Although men in these age groups participate at a far higher level, (around 92 per cent), there is little likelihood that women will approach that commitment, at least as long as women have babies.

Since the early 1980s, the entrance of 15 to 24 year old women into the labour market has been very much dependent on job opportunities and there is no reason to believe this behavioural pattern will change. In recent years, due to the lack of jobs for youth, young women have substituted schooling for jobs. In the future, we can expect young women to continue to participate at an average of 65 per cent over the economic cycle.

Womens' Labour Market Activity Has Stabilized in the 1990s


Per Cent of Women in the Work Force
60
55
50
45
Continued Upward Trend
Stability
76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96
Year

The age group that continues to undergo change, and therefore is more difficult to predict, are middle-aged women, those age 45 to 64 years. Among the younger age cohort of 45–54, already three out of four work. Thus large growth from this group is limited. The older women, those age 54 to 64, this is the group that could conceivably

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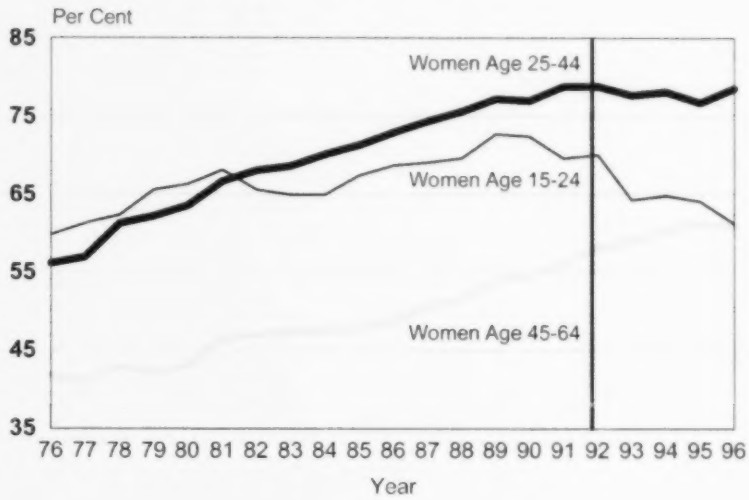
significantly increase their labour market activity. Women in this age group still only participate at the 40 per cent level, but this, inevitably, will increase as younger women who have been accustomed to work most of their lives, age into this age group. However, the increasing tendency for early retirement will likely dampen any upward trend. More importantly, this group only represents 10 per cent of the overall female working age population, and thus their impact on the overall participation rates will likely be marginal.

The Potential for Growth in Women's Participation Depends on their Stage in Life



BC STATS
Province of British Columbia
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highlights

March 7, 1997
Issue: 97-10

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Labour Force

- **British Columbia's unemployment rate rose to 8.6% (seasonally adjusted) in February, an increase of 0.6 percentage points over the previous month.** The upward movement in BC's unemployment rate was mainly due to a 0.7% decline in the number of jobs in the province. The size of the labour force also decreased, as 1,100 people stopped working or looking for work in February.

  Nationally, the unemployment rate remained unchanged in February, at 9.7%. Unemployment rates in the provinces ranged from a low of 6.2% in Saskatchewan to 20.0% in Newfoundland. The increase in BC's unemployment rate was the largest in the country (unemployment was down or flat in most parts of Canada). BC also recorded Canada's largest employment decline (in percentage terms), with 12,800 jobs lost in February. There were 7,800 fewer jobs for women, and 5,000 fewer jobs for men in February than in the previous month. The number of jobs in Ontario decreased by 20,000 during this period, but this represented only 0.4% of total employment in that province. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **The unemployment rate for youth (those between the ages of 15 and 24) in BC declined 0.1 percentage points (based on a 3-month moving average) during the twelve-month period ending in February.** Last month, 15.0% of young people in the labour force were unemployed, compared to 15.1% in February 1996. The national youth unemployment rate was 16.9% last month, an increase of 0.5 percentage points from the same month of 1996.
  Source: Statistics Canada

- **British Columbia's help-wanted index gained a point in February, rising to 72 (1991=100).** Nine provinces recorded increases, and Newfoundland's help-wanted index remained unchanged from January. The largest gains in the help-wanted index were in Alberta (where the index rose 5 points to 108), New Brunswick (from 106 to 111), and Manitoba (from 122 to 127). Nationally, the index increased from 96 to 97 in February. The help-wanted index is compiled from help-wanted ads published in 22 newspapers in 20 major metropolitan areas.
  Source: Statistics Canada

Business and Economics

- **The value of building permits issued by BC municipalities decreased by almost a quarter (22.2%, seasonally adjusted) between December and January.** Permits for residential construction projects were down 19.0%, while planned non-residential construction decreased 28.8%. BC's 19.0% decline in residential permits was almost entirely due to a 43.7% drop in the value of planned multi-unit complexes. Construction intentions for single-family dwellings were only marginally lower (-0.7%) than in December.

  Nationally, the value of building permits issued rose 8.5% in January. Residential construction intentions were up 10.6%, as building plans surged in response to low mortgage rates and high consumer confidence. Planned non-residential construction projects also increased in January, rising 4.8%. Among provinces, the largest gains were in PEI (where the value of permits increased 208.0%), Newfoundland (+64.2%) and Ontario (+26.4%). Both residential (+25.1%) and non-residential (+29.2%) construction intentions were up sharply in Ontario. Nova Scotia (-25.9%), BC (-22.2%), Saskatchewan (-12.4%) and New Brunswick (-12.0%) were the only provinces where building permits fell between December 1996 and January of this year. *Source: Statistics Canada*

For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

Did you know...?
In 1995/96, one in four sentenced admissions to provincial custody in Canada was for failing to pay a fine.

- **Canadian industries operated at 84.8% of their production capacity in the fourth quarter of last year.** This brought capacity utilization to just under the peak rate of 85.1% reached in the fourth quarter of 1994. The historical peak was 86.8% in 1988. Among major industry groups, the mining industry had the highest capacity utilization (88.1%), followed by electric power and gas utilities (86.1%). Overall, capacity utilization in manufacturing averaged 85.3%, with rates ranging from a low of 67.7% in the tobacco products industry to a high of 96.3% in both the rubber products and primary metal products industries. Other industries with very high capacity utilization rates include primary textiles (95.2%), furniture and fixtures (93.7%), and paper and allied products (93.6%). A high capacity utilization rate points to strong demand for an industry's products. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Homeowners in British Columbia spent an average $1,884 on repairs and renovations in 1995.** Average spending on repairs and renovations has been declining steadily since 1992 at both the national and provincial levels. Despite the decline, British Columbians continued to spend more on home repairs than other Canadians. In 1995, spending by homeowners in this province was 13% above the national average ($1,660) and the highest in the country. In other provinces, spending on home repairs ranged from a low of $1,229 in New Brunswick to a high of $1,810 in PEI. Besides BC and PEI, Ontario ($1,754) was the only province where renovation and repair expenditures by homeowners was above the national average. In BC, spending on contract work was considerably higher ($1,148) than spending on materials for do-it-yourself projects ($737). This was also true at the national level ($999, compared to $661). Newfoundland was the only province where homeowners spent more on materials ($1,054) than on contract work ($568).
Source: SC, Catalogue 62-201 XPB

- **Revenues from local telephone services in Canada totalled $6.2 billion in 1995, accounting for 44% of telephone company revenues.** This was the first time that local revenues have exceeded revenues from toll services. Long distance revenues reached $5.3 billion in 1995, or 37% of the total. The increased importance of local telephone revenues is due not only to competition from alternative suppliers of telephone services, but also reflects the growing usage of internet access and fax machines.
Source: Statistics Canada

Health

- **In 1997, an estimated 130,800 Canadians will be diagnosed with cancer, and 60,700 people are expected to die of the disease.** This represents a 36% increase from 1987, when 96,518 new cancer cases were reported. The incidence of cancer has risen during the last ten years. In 1987, there were 3.6 new cancer cases for every 1,000 Canadians; this year, it is expected that there will be 4.4 cases per 1,000 population. The increase in the incidence of cancer has been attributed primarily to the aging of the population.

  While the number of cancer cases has risen considerably during this period, the death rate has not increased nearly as much. The number of deaths due to cancer this year is expected to be 25% higher than in 1987, considerably less than the 36% increase in cancer diagnoses.
Source: Statistics Canada

- **Prostate cancer is now the leading type of cancer among men, accounting for 28% of new diagnoses in 1997.** The second-ranked type of cancer for males is lung cancer (18%). In 1987, lung cancer accounted for 22% of new cases, and prostate cancer made up only 18% of the total. The number of prostate cancer cases has more than doubled during the last ten years. New prostate cancer cases (19,800) are expected to exceed new diagnoses of breast cancer (18,400) in 1987. Breast cancer is the major type of cancer among women, accounting for 30% of new cases, while lung cancer (13%) is ranked second. This represents a major shift during the last ten years, as lung cancer was ranked fourth among the major cancer types in 1987, accounting for 10% of new diagnoses.
Source: Statistics Canada

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